

Message Text

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R 131545Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8869
INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 BAMA KO 1187

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR CH US TW ML
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRC AMBASSADOR

REF: PEKING 0553 (STATE 056376)

1. SUMMARY. AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE PRC AMBASSADOR (HIS FIRST WITH US), HE AND I HAD A SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION AT THE CHINESE EMBASSY ON MARCH 8. WE DISCUSSED PRC-U.S. RELATIONS, TAIWAN, SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA, PARTICULARLY IN THE HORN, AND THE FEBRUARY 28 COUP IN MALI. AT THE END HE ACCEPTED MY INVITATION TO A BILATERAL DINNER-FILM EVENING AT THE RESIDENCE ON APRIL 5. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND. WHEN AMBASSADOR MCGUIRE ARRIVED IN BAMA KO IN 1974, HE CALLED ON THE THEN PRC AMBASSADOR, BUT I BELIEVE THE CALL WAS NOT RETURNED. WHEN THE PRESENT PRC AMBASSADOR, FAN TSO-K'AI, TOOK UP HIS DUTIES IN SEPTEMBER 1975, HE MADE NO MOVE TO CALL
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UPON AMBASSADOR MCGUIRE. HE DID RECEIVE ME, HOWEVER, ON FEBRUARY 7, 1977, AFTER HE GOT BACK FROM WHAT HE CALLED HIS "THREE-MONTH VACATION", AND HE RETURNED THE VISIT THREE WEEKS LATER. THOSE TWO COURTESY CALLS CONSISTED PRINCIPALLY OF A DISCUSSION OF OUR RESPECTIVE AID PROGRAMS, PLUS A STANDARD RECITATION BY FAN OF THE THREE PRC CONDITIONS CONCERNING TAIWAN FOR THE NORMALI-

ZATION OF U.S.-CHINESE RELATIONS. THAT WAS THE END OF ANY FORMAL BILATERAL ACTIVITY.

3. WE INVITE THE CHINESE TO APPROPRIATE RECEPTIONS, SUCH AS FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY; THEY DO NOT COME AND DO NOT EXPLAIN. THEY NEVER INVITE US TO ANYTHING. ONCE, HOWEVER, A SEPTEMBER 1977 PHOTO EXHIBIT ON MAO, THE PAO AND I WENT ANYWAY, DURING HOURS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, AND THE CHINESE SEEMED PLEASED. WE SEND THEM OUR CIRCULAR DIPLOMATIC NOTES; THEY DO NOT RECIPROCATATE. BUT AT MALIAN AND THIRD-COUNTRY CEREMONIES AND RECEPTIONS, THE PRC AMBASSADOR AND HIS WIFE, THE COUNSELOR, THE MILITARY ATTACHE, AND THEIR INTERPRETERS (THESE ARE THE ONLY CHINESE SEEN ON THE DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT) ARE INVARIABLY AFFABLE AND WILLING TO EXCHANGE SMALL TALK. ALL CONVERSATIONAL INITIATIVES ON THESE OCCASIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN OURS.

4. THEN ON FEBRUARY 26 AT THE AIRPORT, AS THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS DISBANDING AFTER SEEING OFF MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH, THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR SAID WE SHOULD GET TOGETHER TO "TALK A BIT". THE COUP TOOK PLACE ON FEBRUARY 28, AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL A COUPLE OF DAYS AFTERWARD THAT I WAS ABLE TO FOLLOW UP.

5. THE CONVERSATION. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 8 AT THE PRC EMBASSY (MY FIRST TIME INSIDE THE NEW CHINESE CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY, A FOUR-STORY BUILDING IMPOSING BY MALIAN STANDARDS, WITH A HUGH COMPLEX OF VILLAS BEHIND). IT LASTED AN HOUR AND A HALF, INCLUDING TIME FOR FAN'S INTERPRETER, USING FRENCH AS THE COMMON LANGUAGE. THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE COVERED:

6. U.S.-MALI RELATIONS. THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR BEGAN BY REMARKING ON THE IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MALI. HE SAID THAT WAS A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT, IT WAS GOOD THAT WE WERE GIVING MALI SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC AID, HE HOPED THE AMOUNT WOULD INCREASE, AND THAT WE SHOULD BE "COURAGEOUS".

7. CHINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT THE CHINESE AND AMERICAN PEOPLES HAD TRADITIONALLY BEEN FRIENDS. SINCE THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE OF 1972, RELATIONS OF A SORT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. THEY HAD NOT IMPROVED MUCH SINCE, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY HAD NOT WORSENERED, WITHER. HE THOUGHT THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WAS IMPORTANT FIRST IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND SECONDLY FOR OUR BILATERAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. "WE" HAD TO HANDLE THE "POLAR BEAR" AND IN THAT EFFORT "WE" HAD MUCH IN COMMON.

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8. THE HORN OF AFRICA. FAN POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD BEEN
AMBASSADOR TO SOMALIA FOR FIVE YEARS AND KNEW THE SITUA-
TION FIRST-HAND. HE SAID THAT AFTER THE PEACE CORPS
HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM SOMALIA, THE SOVIETS HAD COME IN
IN GREAT NUMBERS. THEY HAD ENCOURAGED SOMALIA TO TAKE THE
OGADEN BY FORCE, WHEREAS HE, UNDER THE INSTRUCTIONS OF
HIS GOVERNMENT, HAD COUNSELED THEM NOT TO RESORT TO
MILITARY MEANS BUT TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION. SHORTLY AFTER
SOMALIA THREW THE SOVIETS OUT, THE SOVIETS HAD MANEUVERED
SO THAT THERE WAS A CHANGE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES IN
ETHIOPIA. THEY THEN HAD GONE INTO ETHIOPIA WITH MASSIVE
ARMS AND ENCOURAGED THEM TO FIGHT. THE ENTIRE CONFLICT IN
THE HORN WAS THE FAULT OF THE SOVIETS ALONE. ETHIOPIA
HAD SAID PUBLICLY THAT IT WOULD NOT CROSS THE SOMALI
FRONTIER. THE PRC HOPED THAT THAT WAS SO. THE CHINESE
POSITION WAS CLEAR: SOMALIA SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE
OGADEN, INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES SHOULD BE RESPECTED, AND
A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE REACHED UNDER OAU AUSPICES.

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9. CUBAN ACTIVITY. I RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE LARGESCALE CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN GENERAL, CITING NUMBERS AND DESCRIBING ACTIVITIES. THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR SAID ALL OF THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE A BAD EFFECT IN CUBA ITSELF THAT MIGHT BRING ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES THERE. MUCH RESENTMENT ALREADY EXISTED BECAUSE CUBANS WERE DYING IN AFRICA. CUBA WAS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE SOVIETS. IN LIGHT OF WHAT THE CUBANS WERE DOING IN AFRICA, THE CHINESE THOUGHT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP TRYING TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

10. SOVIET INTENTIONS. THE SOVIETS COULD SAY "SWEET WORDS" BUT WERE CAPABLE OF "WILD ACTS". NEITHER THE WEST, NOR THE PRC, NOR THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES SUPPLIED HEAVY ARMS TO AFRICA, BUT THE SOVIETS DID EVERYWHERE IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR AIMS. THEY WANTED PORTS. THEY HAD LOST THEIR BASE AT BERBERA, WHICH HE HAD SEEN HIMSELF, AND SO NOW WERE LOOKING AT ETHIOPIA, ADEN, DJIBOUTI. THEY WERE EMBARKED ON A STRATEGIC DRIVE TO CUT OFF VITAL OIL ROUTES, WHICH, IN ADDITION TO OTHER EFFECTS, WOULD BE BAD FOR SAUDI ARABIA. "WE" MUST ALL PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO SOVIET ACTIONS.

11. MALI. "NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT MALI." SAID FAN. (I HAD THOUGHT I WOULD HAVE TO BRING UP THE SUBJECT AND DID NOT EXPECT TO GET MUCH REACTION.) SAYING TENSIONS HAD EXISTED WITHIN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR A LONG TIME, HE LAUNCHED INTO A LONG, DETAILED ACCOUNT OF EVENTS, BEGINNING WITH THE DAY-LONG JANUARY 5 MEETING AT WHICH PRESIDENT TRAORE HAD DEMANDED THE REMOVAL OF KISSIMA DOUKARA AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE. OTHERS HAD SUPPORTED DOUKARA, THE PRC AMBASSADOR SAID, AND SO HE HAD STAYED ON IN THE CABINET RESHUFFLE ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 7. THE QUESTION THEN HAD BECOME WHO WOULD OVERTHROW WHOM. DOUKARA AND DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY TIECORO BAGAYOKO WERE PLANNING A COUP BUT PRESIDENT TRAORE HAD LEARNED OF IT AND HAD THEM ARRESTED ON CONFIDENTIAL

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FEBRUARY 28. THE VENTS SEEMED TO BE A SIMPLE POWER STRUGGLE BUT AT BOTTOM THERE HAD BEEN CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS IN THEIR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES. HE CITED VARIOUS EXAMPLES: IN THE MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE, TRAORE HAD FAVORED NEGOTIATION, WHEREAS DOUKARA WAS FOR WAR. IN THE CASE OF FORMER PRESIDENT MODIBO KEITA, PRESIDENT TRAORE HAD SAID IN PARIS IN 1976 THAT HE PLANNED TO RELEASE HIM AND GAVE A BBC JOURNALIST PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW HIM. IN BAMA KO, DOUKARA HAD REFUSED TO LET THE MEETING TAKE PLACE. THE JOURNALIST, QUITE ANGRY, HAD ASKED THE LOCAL HSI NHUA REPRESENTATIVE, "WHO GOVERNS MALI?" ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE DIVERGENCE WAS THE STUDENT UNREST OF LAST YEAR. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE WERE FOR DIALOGUE, BUT DOUKARA AND TIECORO HAD INSISTED ON REPRESSION. THERE WERE ALSO THE QUESTIONS OF DOUKARA'S CORRUPTION AND HIS OPPOSITION TO

FORMATION OF THE POLITICAL PARTY WHICH THE PRESIDENT ESPOUSED.
WITH DOUKARA AND TIECORO GONE, FAN SAID, PRESIDENT TRAORE SHOULD
BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT HIS POLICIES MORE EASILY. THE FORCES OF
MODERATION HAD WON OUT.

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12. THE QUESTION NOW WAS WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY OUTSIDE
INFLUENCE ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS, FAN CONTINUED. THE
SOVIETS WERE BRINGING IN HUGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS. THEY
HAD INCREASED THE NUMBER OF THEIR MILITARY ADVISERS FROM
40 TO 150. THEY WERE CONSTRUCTING A HUGE AIRFIELD AT
MOPTI, WHERE THERE WERE 30 SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS ALONE.
HE SENSED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN INVOLVED BUT IT WAS
NOT YET CLEAR HOW, AND ONE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE
FULL STORY TO EMERGE. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID, MALI WOULD
STILL NEED THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE OF ITS DEPENDENCE ON THE
USSR FOR ARMS.

13. TAIWAN, U.S.-PRC RELATIONS, AND THE SOVIET UNION.
I ASKED FAN IF IT WERE TRUE, AS THE PRESS REPORTED, THAT
A HIGH-LEVEL CHINESE LEADER HAD INSTRUCTED THE AMRED
FORCES TO PREPARE TO LIBERATE TAIWAN BY FORCE. HE RESPONDED
THAT THE QUESTION HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT LENGTH
RECENTLY WITH A VISITING AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
IN PEKING. HE ASSERTED THAT TAIWAN WAS AN INTERNAL QUESTION.
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(ON ANOTHER OCCASION HE HAD REFERRED TO CHOU EN-LAI'S STATEMENT AT BANDUNG THAT EXCLUDED INTERNAL QUESTIONS FROM THE GENERAL PROHIBITION AGAINST THE USE OF FORCE TO REGULATE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.) THE PRC HAD TWO OPTIONS IN THE MATTER: TO SETTLE THE TAIWAN ISSUE BY PEACEFUL MEANS, WHICH WAS THE PRINCIPAL OPTION, OR TO RESORT TO FORCE, WHICH WAS NOT THE PREFERRED SOLUTION, AND SO

PREPARATION WAS IN THE NATURE OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING. ONE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW THE SITUATION EVOLVED.

14. FAN REVERTED TO THE ISSUE OF U.S.-PRC RELATIONS, COMMENTING THAT THERE WERE NOW TWO CURRENTS OF THOUGHT CONCERNING THE CHINA QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN TWO STREAMS DURING THE VIET-NAM WAR, BUT AFTER THAT WAS OVER, THE DIVISION OF OPINION HAD DISAPPEARED. TWO VIEWS ALSO EXISTED ON THE SOVIET UNION, BUT "WHEN WAR BREAKS OUT," THE NATION WOULD BE UNITED. WHEN I PICKED HIM UP ON HIS USE OF THE DECLARATIVE, HE REPLIED THAT THE PRC BELIEVED THAT WORLD WAR WAS INEVITABLE. IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT COME SOON, AND THE PRC WANTED TO POSTPONE THE EVENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS, AND THE CHINESE WERE AGAINST APPEASEMENT. ONE HAD TO BE PREPARED FOR WAR, TO SEEK TO BREACH SOVIET STRATEGIC DISPOSITIONS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT YET READY, AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE USSR'S VULNERABLE POINTS. THE SOVIETS WERE WEAK IN THEIR AGRICULTURE AND IN THEIR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. THAT WAS WHY THE PRC WAS OPPOSED TO THE UNITED STATES' SELLING MILLIONS OF TONS OF GRAIN AND TO EUROPE'S SUPPLYING ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY TO THE USSR. EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES WERE HELPING THE SOVIET UNION IN PRECISELY

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ITS AREAS OF WEAKNESS.

15. THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR AGAIN REFERRED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT AND THEN ADDED THAT THE PRC ALSO WANTED TO NORMALIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE PRC HAD LAID DOWN THREE CONDITIONS FOR SUCH NORMALIZATION, BUT HIS GOVERNMENT ALSO WAS WILLING TO BE FLEXIBLE. PERHAPS A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND ON THE LINES OF THE SETTLEMENT WORKED OUT WITH JAPAN. TO REFRESH MY MEMORY, HE SAID, IT HAD

BEEN AGREED THAT JAPAN COULD MAINTAIN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TAIWAN, AND JAPAN NOW HAD A TRADE MISSION THERE. THE PRC WANTED FULL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, HE AFFIRMED, BUT "WE CAN WAIT, WE CAN WAIT."

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16. BILATERAL SOCIAL EVENING. ABOUT A MONTH AGO, AT A LARGE DIPLOMATIC GATHERING, I ASKED THE PRC AMBASSADOR IF HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO A BILATERAL EVENING AT MY HOME. HE RESPONDED THAT THAT WOULD BE POSSIBLE. I WENT ON TO ASK WHETHER HE WOULD PREFER THAT THIRD NATIONALITIES BE INCLUDED, AND HE SAID IT WOULD "BE BETTER TO BEGIN WITH JUST AMERICANS AND CHINESE. I DID NOT IMMEDIATELY PURSUE THE MATTER BECAUSE I ALREADY HAD IN TRAIN A SOVIET-AMERICAN EVENING, WHICH TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 3. AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION ON MARCH 8, THEREFORE,

I AGAIN BROUGHT UP THE IDEA OF A BILATERAL DINNER WITH FILMS AT MY HOME. THE PRC AMBASSADOR ACCEPTED, AND WE AGREED ON APRIL 5, WITH 12 OF THEM AND 12 OF US. HE WANTED TO KNOW HOW MANY COUNSELORS AND FIRST SECRETARIES WE HAD, AND I REPLIED IN GENERAL TERMS BUT SUGGESTED HE NOT TRY FOR ANY EXACT MATCHING BECAUSE HIS EMBASSY WAS MUCH BIGGER THAN OURS. HE SMILED.
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17. COMMENT. A FORMER "SECRETARY GENERAL" (HIS DESCRIPTION) IN HOPEI PROVINCE, FAN HAS ALWAYS SEEMED SECURE AND CONFIDENT. HE CLEARLY WISHED TO TALK ABOUT SOVIET ACTIVITY IN THE HORN AND ABOUT RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MALL, BUT HE ALSO EASILY RESPONDED TO MY COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON OTHER ISSUES.

18. EXCEPT FOR THE STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO "APPEASEMENT", THERE WAS NOTHING IN FAN'S REMARKS TO IMPLY THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD TAKE A GREATER ROLE IN COUNTERING SOVIET EXPANSION IN AFRICA (REFTEL). HE DID, HOWEVER, NOT VIGOROUSLY AT MY EXPOSITION OF U.S. VIEWS ON SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA AND ON THE PRINCIPLES FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE OGADEN. IN HIS ENUMERATION OF THE THINGS THE WEST SHOULD NOT BE DOING TO STRENGTHEN THE SOVIETS, HE DID NOT MENTION SALT.

19. I ASSUME FAN'S APPROACH IS PART OF A GENERAL PATTERN IN PRC BEHAVIOR, BUT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW HOW IT FITS IN AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING SPECIFIC I CAN USEFULLY LOOK FOR HERE IN BAMAko.
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